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MARS' MASTER

A Classical Exposition of Material Influences that Caused the European War

BY BOB ROGERS

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MARS' MASTER

"The voice of Humanity addresses thee in pain and protest."

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A Classical Exposition of Material Influences that Caused the European War

BY BOB ROGERS

1916

JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY
INCORPORATED

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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$0.75
AUG 10 1916

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TO MY SON

MILTON B.

EXPLANATORY

Finding a particular grain of sand in the desert without any identifying mark or description, were a kindergarten problem against the task of getting at the real truth about the cause of the frightful war now raging in Europe, for students and thinking men know full well that the most skilled writers, the greatest analysts, philosophers and mathematicians in the nations involved in the conflict — and this includes noted statesmen and in not a few instances heads of governments— are laboring industriously in their literary pursuits to conceal the evidence of a crime against civilization

which stands without a parallel in the history of the world.

Since the first mobilization orders went forth to electrify the sleeping armies of Europe and rouse them into action, the belligerent powers repeatedly have accused each other, officially and unofficially, of precipitating the war. Charges and countercharges have been hurled back and forth over the heads of frenzied millions on the fields of battle. The lie has been passed across international boundaries countless times, while deliberate attempts have been made by respected men of learning, aiming to create unified sentiment, to fool the gullible masses with theories they knew to be false.

Specifically, a noted educator identified with one of the great universities in Berlin, published it as his own belief that war is natural, therefore inevitable, and according to the law of change as it was explained by the late Charles Darwin. A professor of equal prominence in one of the great English colleges, denounced this statement in terms that could not be misunderstood while the helpless people stood by and wondered which was right.

Again, the German Imperial Government declared that the German soldiery found papers in Belgium proving a secret treaty between that country and England; the point being made that Belgium

actually sold out her neutrality long before the commanders of Teuton legions demanded an open road through the town of Liege. England's masterfully worded reply to this charge was a denial, of course, and once more the public mind was led astray.

The reason for this war of words is quite obvious to those whose method of finding solutions to problems begins with a study of motives: *The different countries realize that they are facing the dreaded period of reconstruction (almost as nerve-racking in its effect upon a nation as war itself) when public opinion must decide whatever advantage one country shall have over another in the*

matter of good will. Explicitly the nation that emerges from the bedlamism of battle in victory or defeat, it matters not which, with the favor and friendship of the rest of the world, will have this strong and encouraging sentiment as an influence to future progress.

So let us realize the fact that all the powers in Europe covet the friendship and co-operation of all the neutrals in the coming years. Without it there can be no industrial development in any one country in Europe to insure the permanency of Government, continuation of character, personality, national ideals, advancement in education and all things else. The value of this friendship of the neutrals can-

not be estimated in figures or words, but it is great enough for the nations of Europe to assign their best talent to compete for its capture.

With so many men of world-prominence debating with each other on the cause of the war, it may seem presumptuous if not audacious on my part to write on the same subject. But even if it does appear that I am matching my poor talents against those of greater men, it can never be said that I am prejudiced against any race of people, and I feel, therefore, that I am entitled to exoneration on the ground that my motive, to find the truth and nothing else, is an honorable one.

I believe that the war in Europe really began many years ago, when those treaties were signed. The first person, or the first group of persons that promoted a contract between three nations, binding them to support each other in a defensive war, created a condition that made war inevitable. After the formation of "The Triple Entente" and "The Triple Alliance" it was only a question of time before an impetuous deed, like the assassination of Ferdinand and Sophia, would be taken as the signal for military action.

But still there is another powerful agency that had much to do with events leading up to the precipitation of the war, and those

who would know something about this influence are invited to read this little play to its conclusion, beginning with the understanding that the work was suggested by one of the notes written by Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, to the German Imperial Government on the Lusitania case in behalf of Humanity.

The "Court of World-Knowledge," where the scene is laid, should be interpreted to mean what the world will know when all is said and done. In other words, the interior of the mind of the world is here presented as it will appear in condition when the facts are known. "History" is the judge on the bench because

it is History that will some day decide who is responsible for the war. "Humanity" is introduced as the prosecuting witness inasmuch as it is Humanity who suffers most. "Christian" comes into the play, representing Christianity, as the lover of Humanity. In a word, love of Humanity is the first and highest principle of Christianity. Where this sentiment is lacking Christianity does not exist.

Upon its doubtful and uncertain career I start this little book sustained by the knowledge that its contents awakening even so much as some slight moiety of sympathy for Humanity, it has not been in vain.

THE AUTHOR.

MARS' MASTER

By Bob Rogers

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

History.....Adjudicator
Humanity.....Prosecuting Witness
Fool.
Commercialism.
Journalism.
Intruder.....An Uncalled Witness
Christian.....Humanity's Advocate

Scene: Court of World-Knowledge.

Time: At the end of the European War.

MARS' MASTER

Mars' Master

Scene 1: *The Court of World-Knowledge. In the distance the figure of Justice, blindfolded, and holding out her scales, stands above the earth between the American and European continents. History, turning over papers in which he is deeply interested apparently when Humanity, groaning aloud, staggers into the court and falls before the rostrum. Humanity raises her head and in a weak voice speaks:*

Humanity:

Most high, most mighty, most equitable, and most beneficent History: Humanity lies prostrate before thee pleading for recognition.

History:

Is it come to this? Humanity, trusting, mild and unoffending on bended knee? What cruel fortune's dragged thee down from rightful reign to lowly supplication? Arise, and weep no more. By that bond of sympathy and faith between us, I pledge thee deepest devotion. In the Court of World-Knowledge, where exists no prescribed, technical procedure, thou art welcome. Make known thy slightest will and History is thy minister.

Humanity:

Just and generous History, the voice of Humanity addresses thee in pain and protest, moved to

speech by heavy and disquieting wounds inflicted by some craven, malevolent and hidden enemy!

History:

Ha! Didst thou say "hidden enemy?" Enemy that strikes from place of concealment. What mortal could be so like the devil to assail our beloved and defenseless Humanity? Nay, do not weep, for History will soften thy wounds, expose thy enemy, and redress thy wrongs. Haste me to know the circumstances.

Humanity:

It was nearing the close of the summer of 1914. I was happy and content, for the nations of the

world were at peace with each other, and God in His heaven showered His blessings with a bounteous hand upon the earth and its toiling millions. The poor cobbler sat in his doorway as the light of the amber sun died out of the sky, singing his song of thanks to the Almighty as he worked and earned sustenance for his little family. The shops were busy; the factories humming with industry; the fields gave forth abundance of her products for all mankind; the flowers never bloomed more fair, and the lark soaring in the meadow, sang a song that was soothing and sweet, when suddenly and without warning, some demon of blackest darkness, with subtle cunning and

heartless premeditation let slip the dogs of war, and the roseate picture of calm, freedom, and love, faded into a vista of death and destruction! Germany, England, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Turkey, Belgium, Serbia, all were dragged into the desperate conflict, and amid the shifting seasons, through smiling spring and summer, and winter's snow and ice, rended each other to pieces, and steeped their brutal hands in the blood of Humanity.

History:

No more! I pray thee speak no more. Thou griev'st me to the soul where welling springs of

sympathy, moved by thy tragic recital, run over with the scalding tears of sorrow. Thou wilt name the author of this monstrous crime so History, with the damning evidence, may write it down on the tables of everlasting memory.

Humanity:

Nay, I know not who, nor how, nor why. I only know that I heard something about the breaking off of diplomatic relations, and then the storm of strife broke in all its fury.

History:

Thou didst hear of the breaking off of diplomatic relations? Then we will call Diplomacy, from whose

lips we'll hear the name of thy foe. Diplomacy, thou are summoned to the Court of World-Knowledge.

[*Enter Fool in cap and bells singing.*]

"At the battle of the Nile,
They were fighting all the while—
They were fighting all the while,
At the battle of the Nile.
At the battle of the Nile,
They were fighting all the while—
They were fighting all the while,
At the battle of the Nile."

History:

What meanst thou by this impudence? And why dost thou answer to the call for Diplomacy? Thou art not Diplomacy.

Fool:

Thou art right and wrong, History, and so thy reputation for accuracy is good and bad. No, I am not Diplomacy, but I was Diplomacy until they gave me the name of "Fool." See the cap and bells? I' faith, I like the costume, and the name, too, fits me nicely.

History:

Fool, thy presence in the Court of World-Knowledge shall be of benefit, for one thing thou dost prove that there is something in a name. And so, for the sake of technical accuracy, and according to legal custom, we'll call thee "Diplomacy, alias Fool." Diplo-

macy alias Fool, to thy credit thou didst maintain friendly relations 'twixt the Powers of Europe. Thou didst conduct negotiations for the different countries in the summer of 1914, and from thee History would know the cause of the war.

Fool:

No more than that? Indeed, History, 'tis as plain as thy ignorance: albeit I will explain as follows: It was some time after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, that Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, through their duly authorized agents, formed what is known as "The Triple Alliance." This treaty was the result of an hy-

pothetical neoplasm of the constitutional rights of the Teutonic and Slavonic unifications. Then England, France, and Russia, anticipating a heterogeneous constellation of the equinox, signed a contract along similar lines styled "The Triple Entente." Under the circumstances described, with three nations on one side, and three on the other, the natural result was administrative confusion through the orthosymmetrical transposition of governmental functions. The negative and positive vibrancy of the subtangent, growing out of the clavicornia, and the ellipsis of the quadrilateral negotiations, precipitated the combat. See how simple it is?

History:

Away with thee and thy meaningless platitudes! Humanity, I do not mean to chide thee, but thou wert reckless indeed to trust thy happiness and well-being into the hands of this blundering clown. Better hadst thou thrown thy fortunes to the aimless winds with a prayer to the God of Chance to favor thee.

Humanity:

Nay, it was not I that did it. It was not I that commissioned Diplomacy to act. It was the Sovereign rulers, who slighted all consideration of war's effect on Humanity. Ignored me in mine own affairs of government, for all government belongs to Humanity.

History:

Then we will call these rulers, if in our words we may honor them as such, and make them reveal the hidden facts.

Humanity:

No, no, I pray you do not call them. I know what they will say. 'Tis written here.

[*Humanity hands History a bundle of papers. History reads as follows*]:

"England entered the war in defense of Belgian neutrality after the conflict had been originated by Germany.

"(*Signed*) *George V.*"

"Germany declared war in self-defense, while Russian soldiers were mobilizing on German borders. England engineered the political situations preceding the conflict for the destruction of German Commerce.

"(*Signed*) *William II.*"

"Belgium proclaimed her neutrality to all the world, but we were attacked by Germany and forced into the trenches against our will. We fought for the right to be peaceful.

"(*Signed*) *Albert.*"

"France declared war while German soldiers were advancing on

French borders. In self-defense and to uphold the honor of our treaty pledge to Russia.

"(*Signed*) *Poincaire.*"

"Russia was bound to remain loyal to her Serbian ally when attacked without provocation by Germany.

"(*Signed*) *Nicholas II.*"

"My son and daughter-in-law were foully slain as the result of a Serbian plot, and an insulting disregard of our sincere appeal for justice was equivalent to an act of war, and thus the Dual Monarchy was compelled to draw the sword.

"(*Signed*) *Franz Joseph.*"

"Serbia was not to blame for the assassination of Ferdinand and Sophia. It was the act of an

anarchist! Though robbed of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we were extravagant in our offers of reparation to the Dual Monarchy, but Franz Joseph, with the Kaiser at his back and panting in his ear, issued the first declaration of war.

"(*Signed*)

"*Peter Karageorgevitch.*"

"Turkey kept out of the war until she learned of a conspiracy among the Entente Allies to give her lands to Russia.

"(*Signed*) *Enver Pasha.*"

"Italy's righteous cause was the recovery of property stolen by the Dual Monarchy.

"(*Signed*)

"*Victor Emmanuel.*"

History:

Enough! Enough! With such conflicting testimony as this the task is hopeless. We must have more reliable witnesses.

Humanity:

Noble and righteous History, the Count Leo Tolstoy did write a book in which he did say that Commercialism would plunge the world into a war. Perchance 'twill not be in vain to question Commercialism.

History:

Commercialism, thou wilt come to the Court of World-Knowledge and tell thy part in the war.

Commercialism:

With all the solemnity of a devout and faithful soul in the presence of the Deity, I do proclaim mine innocence. War means destruction, and Commercialism means construction. I provide employment for all, food for all, homes for all, education for all, rich and poor alike, and thus, under my influence the progress of the world goes on. I owe my existence to the toiling masses; not the classes.—I am the masses! The masses did not seek for war and therefore the conscience of Commercialism is clear. Under the great natural law, there must be leaders and followers. If the leader is honest, he is the

helmsman who guides the vessel away from the rocks to the harbor of safety. Otherwise, woe betide the trusting ones who look to him for guidance. I do believe that the *few,* with those subtle arts and wiles known to political science, practiced witchcraft on the *many,* and led them as the shepherd leads his flock, into the valley of death. And all during the progress of the march over the highways of ruin and disaster, the name of Commercialism was a target for the shafts of slanderers. Thus, the real criminals made their escape while Commercialism, innocent of wrong, was tried and convicted in the public mind. But in the Court of World-Knowledge, I shall be ex-

onerated on mine own defense, based on the fact that I provide employment for all, food for all, homes for all, education for all, rich and poor alike, and so, under my influence the progress of the world goes on.

(*Exeunt.*)

History:

Humanity, I do believe that Commercialism is thy true and loyal friend, and therefore blameless. We must have still more witnesses.

Humanity:

Alas, History, I do not know but one, and that is Truth. But Truth deserted me at the opening of the war and I have sought her since in vain.

History:

Nevertheless we will call Truth. Truth, thy adored and radiant presence is importuned in the Court of World-Knowledge. She does not answer—Truth, shining and beauteous angel of honorable purpose, we pray thee come—She does not answer. Truth, fairest flower, in the garden of righteousness, History addresses thee in fervent prayer in behalf of suffering Humanity. Truth—Ah! She comes! She comes! I see her form in the distance! I knew she would not—

Humanity:

No, no, History, this is not Truth. This is Journalism. He can tell

us nothing, and, therefore, he is out of place in the Court of World-Knowledge.

History:

Nay, be not too hasty. Journalism perchance may know the whereabouts of Truth. We will question him — Thou art Journalism, art thou?

Journalism:

I am Journalism.

History:

Journalism, thou wert the lover of Truth. Where is she?

Journalism:

Nay, I know not for Censorship has stolen her away from me, and

I cannot live without her. She disappeared at the inception of the war, when Falsehood came to take her place. But Falsehood can ne'er ingratiate herself into the favor of Journalism. I loathe and detest her as a bawdy thing. Her charms are evil and naught compared to the virtues and attractions of my beloved Truth. I seek for Truth, and I will find her in spite of Censorship. (*Exeunt.*)

History:

Fare thee well Journalism, and God be with thee in the search. Until we find Truth, History will never know the cause of the war.

[*Enter Intruder, shrieking and laughing hysterically and singing.*]

"The Sword of Mars is unsheathed
Yo-ho! and the slaughter goes on;
But the legions of death are relentless,
Till a glorious victory's won."

History:

Ho! this way with the guard! Seize him! By all the gods I swear thy profanity condemns thee to the rack!

Intruder:

[*Laughing derisively.*]

The rack? Ha, ha,—Why, we are kinsmen, the rack and I,—kinsmen by all the laws of sympathy and

blood,—mostly blood. And believe me History, he's a jolly rogue for royal entertainment.

History:

What saturated wabbler art thou? Thy name? Speak!

Intruder:

My name? Ha, ha, ha! Why, canst thou not tell by the light in mine eyes that I am Insanity? Ha, ha, ha! I am here to confess to thee that it was I that precipitated the war in Europe. I am here to tell thee that it was Insanity that directed the slaughter of the innocents, but thou canst not punish me for I am not responsible, and

here's the reason why: Man is accepted as the masterpiece of God. Man was created with the faculty to judge between right and wrong, and it was the bestowal of this gift that released the Almighty from responsibility, and so, each man must work out his own salvation— But Insanity was not so favored. I was denied the power of judgment and understanding and my creator must answer for my deeds of violence and wrong. And wouldst thou know my creator? Why, I am the fruit of men's folly and if thou wouldst learn how I came into being in Europe, test the bloodstream of the European nobility—Think about the poverty and the crime of Italy—Ponder

well the oppression, the slavery, and ignorance of Russia—Observe the intemperance and race suicide of France — Consider the intermarriage of the English royal family—Heed you the Hapsburg tragedies, and pity Germania 'neath the iron heel of militarism—The nobility is responsible for me, and at these men I point the accusing finger and condemn them to everlasting damnation — And again I say that I plunged the world into a war, and if thou art skeptical about this, I will remind thee that it was Balmés, the great Spanish philosopher, who did write a book in which he did say that the reformation in England during the reign of Henry VIII, was due to

the state of mind of the people; to the turbulent mental conditions created by centuries of force, and violence, and bloodshed, originating back beyond the time when Rome was in the ascendency. Ha, ha, ha! Verily it is possible for races of people, like individuals, to act under the spell of madness. And as proof of this I tell you that the last words of the Son of Man, as he died on the cross, were: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!—Aye! Indeed, I am the Master of Mars! The God of War is obedient to the will of Insanity! The world is gone mad, and Insanity is King with millions of subjects—H, ha, ha! And History

will decide that it was Insanity that caused the war in Europe.

[*As Insanity rushes out Humanity reels and falls.*]

History:

God, oh God—If ever pity moved Thee look down upon this fainting form and feel it now. See, see Humanity abject and wretched as Mary at the cross. High and Holy Sovereign—Sublime Personality of Heaven — We acknowledge Thee Creator of all things—Giver of light and air and nature's qualities, but these are naught without Thy blessing.

Humanity:

[*Recovering and speaking dreamily.*]

Sweet song of love and peace—strength — confidence — children's prattle — sunshine — flowers, and blessed Hope, all, all forever lost. 'Gulfed in the maelstrom of Despair. Oh, woe is me! Oh, woe is me!

History:

Woe indeed to so resign. Rouse—Rouse thy sinking spirit. Thy future with promise awaits thee.

Humanity:

[*Struggling to free herself.*]

Mine enemy lurks in the future.

History:

I pledge myself thine enemy to destroy.

[*History releases Humanity as she shows signs of composure.*]

Humanity:

Alas! History, Insanity is an enemy thy pen can describe, but never destroy.

History:

Then I'll strive until I fail; nor comply without a struggle. I tell thee, Humanity, thy yielding soul has brought thee ruin, for villainy finds opportunity in weakness. Think of this, and know that God will send his legions to defend thee.

[*As these words are spoken, a melodious voice is heard singing in the distance.*]

"Oh, come all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant," etc.

[*History and Humanity stand transfixed in listening attitude. As the song rises in volume, Humanity looks toward the sound and cries*]:

Oh, spare me this reminder of death. It is a soldier!

[*As History advances to protect her, enter Christian, armed with sword and shield, and finishing his song.*]

Christian:

Aye! I *am* a soldier; a soldier in the service of God. Behold! I am Christian. I come to pledge allegiance everlasting and undying to wronged Humanity.

[*Humanity throws herself weeping on Christian's bosom, while History makes the sign of the cross murmuring*]:

"Lord, God of Hosts, my prayer is answered."

Christian:

Peace! Peace, Humanity. It is I, Christian, that gives thee peace. Thy sorrows run their course, and

Christian comes to lead thee to the Garden of Happiness. Tranquil and serene it nestles there in the placid sea of after years. It is the Garden of the World when civilization comes into its own. Sounding with the patter of children's feet; laughter of Youth; sweet music vibrating from joyous souls through vales of smiling blossoms, and supreme over all the inspiring and protecting presence of God.

Humanity:

And dost thou know the way?

Christian:

I do, and I will tell thee. Listen: There is a land beyond the seas

that points the way. Abiding place of liberty and justice. Where love of Humanity is instinctive under the influence of Truth and the lessons of the Nazarene. 'T was separated by God, in His wisdom, from all the rest to mingle races in the birth of the future civilization. Come!

[*As Christian holds out his hand, the stars in the heavens fade out gradually until a cross of stars is formed in the place where Justice stood on the world between the two continents. As they move toward exit, hands joined, History speaks.*]

History:

And History records the glorious truth that Christianity and Humanity are one and inseparable.

CURTAIN

ENCOMIUMS

ENCOMIUMS

Louisville, Ky., January 20, 1916.

Mr. R. C. Rogers, *Louisville Herald*, City.

My Dear Mr. Rogers:

I was sorry you hurried off before the meeting broke up the other night as I wanted an opportunity to tell you how much I enjoyed the recital of your play—It was fine! I knew you were a fine news writer, but I did not know before that you had in you so much of the combination of historian, poet, and philosopher, not to mention your histrionic power. It surely was a great treat to everybody, and it certainly was to me.

Sincerely yours,

A. Y. Ford.

[The above letter was written a few days after a reading of "Mars' Master" at the annual meeting of the Engineers' and Architects' Club of Louisville. The writer is President of the Board of Trustees of the University of Louisville, one of the foremost institutions of learning in the South.]

ENCOMIUMS

The following articles appeared in the columns of *The News Democrat*, Paducah, Ky., January 6, 1916, the next day after a meeting of the Paducah Rotary Club at which "Mars' Master" was the principal event on the programme:

"BOB" ROGERS DELIGHTS ROTARIANS WITH "MARS' MASTER," AN ALLEGORY.

In the diary of their meetings the Paducah Rotarians have set down yesterday's luncheon gathering at the Palmer House as the most enjoyable. They do this because of the presence there of Robert C. "Bob" Rogers, of the *Louisville Herald*, as the honor guest, and the fact that he gave them during the demi-tasse and cigars his allegorical arrangement of the World War, "Mars' Master," which it appears is about to make him famous.

The idea embodied in the allegory showed Mr. Rogers to be a thinker of unusual genius for originality, clear perception and grasp of fundamental truth and the manner in which the idea is clothed and given expression showed him to be a rare master of the

English language and a man of genuine artistic powers. One might exhaust all the pompous and bizarre adjectives in the language and not exaggerate the value of his sketch both as a piece of literature and as an exposé of war.

In the course of the allegory Mr. Rogers attempts, and succeeds to an admirable degree, to show the true aspect of war and its real effect on mankind. His manner of presentation is in a court scene. He conceives a "Court of World-Knowledge," with War on trial. Humanity is the prosecuting witness and History is the judge. The court is trying to get at the cause of the crime of War and in the course of the trial calls as witnesses for examination, Diplomacy, the Rulers of the Warring Nations, Commercialism, Truth, and Journalism.

These witnesses are questioned in the order mentioned, but without the court being successful in fixing the responsibility for the war. Then, as the court sits baffled, a hideous wild-eyed creature, babbling insanely, staggers into the court room. Judge History demands to know who the mad stranger is and the new arrival cries out that he is Insanity and confesses to having caused the war in Europe. History wants to know from whence he comes and Insanity

replies that to determine his origin the blood of the depraved European nobility must be examined.

Thus the author of the allegory shows that the insane lust of the European nobility for power, wealth, and dominion rears up the monster Insanity, which is the breeder of War. Mr. Rogers lays no blame for the great War on the people of the warring nations, but upon the rulers. For example, he thinks there are no finer people than the Germans as a people, but hates the corrupt, avaricious German nobility that has set these noble people to such inhuman and disgraceful tasks.

The time of the allegory is directly after the close of the great war now raging.

ENCOMIUMS

ROTARIANS GIVEN A TREAT.

Paducah Rotarians are deeply indebted to Rotarian Bob Rogers, of Louisville, who at the Rotarian luncheon Wednesday gave the gathering by far the greatest treat which has been enjoyed in the history of the organization. For a period of twenty minutes Mr. Rogers gave an allegorical picture, the theme of which centered about the great European conflict. In a style in which beauty of word painting blended with a charm of delivery his drama of war and reality was presented as a gem long to be remembered by all who heard it. If the Louisville Rotary Club has on its membership any more at home like Bob Rogers there is a vacant chair ever ready for him at any of the delightful gatherings of the Paducah Rotarians. And by the way, should Rotarian Rogers ever feel an inclination to visit Paducah again there will be a waiting delegation composed of the entire membership to give him welcome.

—*Editorial Page.*

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